



# U.S. Senator Judd Gregg, Chairman

## Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

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### **Gregg, HELP Committee Hold Hearing on Head Start** *Witnesses Testify on the Need to Close the School Readiness Gap*

**Washington** - Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH), Chairman of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions convened a hearing today on the successful Head Start program. Gregg, and other members of the HELP Committee, heard from the Administration, early childhood experts, and those with hands on experience in local Head Start programs. Witnesses noted the popularity of the 40 year old program but noted many areas where the program can be improved.

"Throughout its history, Head Start has shown itself to be largely a successful program, one that has earned wide support from members of Congress, including myself. That said, I do believe that there is still room for improvement," said Senator Gregg.

"While we know that Head Start is helping children to achieve some gains, we know that many Head Start children are still arriving at kindergarten well behind their more affluent peers. We should and can do a better job at helping Head Start children prepare for school and for success later in life. The most important job we have as adults and parents is to provide our children with the opportunity to grow up in safe and healthy environments with access to quality care and education. The Head Start Program is designed to help families and communities do just that. As we reauthorize Head Start this year, we must build upon the program's successes to make sure that every child, regardless of economic status, has the best chance possible to succeed," said Senator Gregg.

Senator Gregg has signaled his desire to introduce a bill before the August recess. Bipartisan meetings are beginning and Senator Gregg hopes that once a bill has been introduced, the HELP Committee can move quickly to a markup of the legislation in early September.

Established in 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson as part of his War on Poverty, Head Start is the largest Federal early care and education program and is one of the nation's most popular domestic initiatives. With a budget of nearly \$7 billion, Head Start provides education and other support services to over 900,000 extremely low-income children.

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Witness testimony can be found on the HELP Committee Website at [www.labor.senate.gov](http://www.labor.senate.gov)

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